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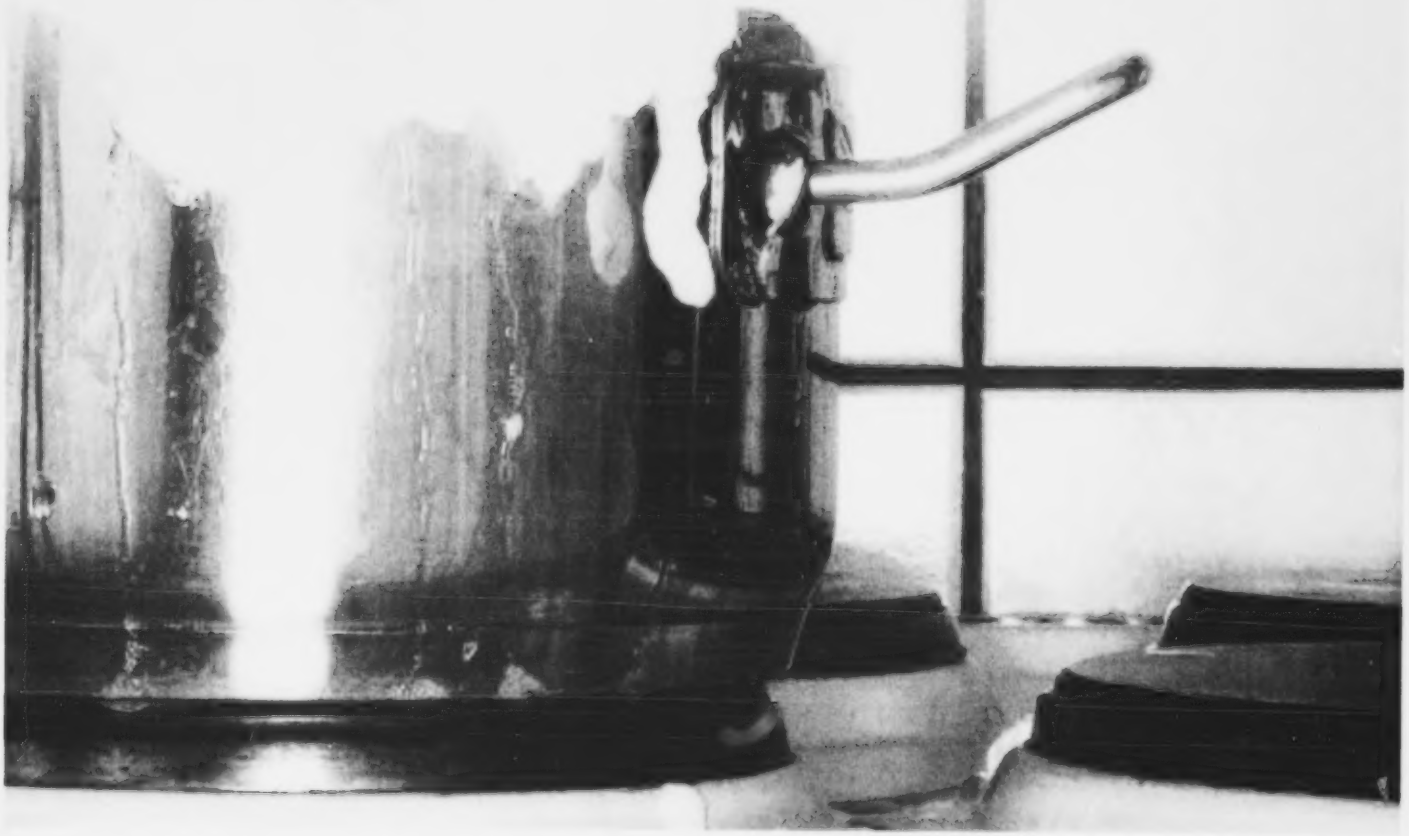
OCCUPATIONAL

# Health & Safety

MAGAZINE

## CATERING TO KITCHEN SAFETY

Know the Code pg.16



# Industry and Occupational Therapy

## A WINNING COMBINATION

**by Dana Robinson**

I knew that my studies in occupational therapy could lead me down many different paths, but I never expected to end up working in the pork processing industry.

Most students in the Occupational Therapy degree program that I am taking at the University of Alberta complete the work placement requirement in traditional clinical settings, where they reactively deal with injured workers. However, I had a summer job at Sunterra and thought that a placement there, where I could work proactively, would make a lot of sense. I knew that working in the meat-packing industry is physically and mentally very demanding, and that the fast-paced, precise nature of the job presents some unique health and safety challenges. My placement coordinators accepted my proposal, so I spent the summer of 2003 as an intern at the Sunterra Meats hog processing plant in Trochu.

### The work placement project

The first part of my project at Sunterra was to identify "critical task demands" for each position at the plant. I documented the physical and mental demands of each job, and for those identified as "high-risk" I recommended ways to reduce the health risks. The final product was a written compilation of all job tasks along with recommendations for changes in the way the job is done. For example, I recommended lowering the overhead bag dispenser and raising the workstation to reduce the amount of reaching and bending.

The second part was to educate management about the importance of job task assessment and workstation design.

The information I collected has almost endless applications. Sunterra Meats – Trochu is using my report as a tool for communicating with medical and rehabilitation professionals in the region, and as guide for designing workstations in the future development of the facility. The company can also use my project as a basis for developing pre-employment screening, injury prevention and vocational training programs.

In my occupational therapy studies I have learned to critically analyze the interface between workers and their environments. I know how to look for the compatibility, adaptability and suitability of a given activity in a particular workspace, and can suggest ways to maximize efficiency and function. After I helped the hands-on management team to see what I saw, they were in a better position to build a long-term plan for reducing injuries.

### The advantages of enhanced industry – OT connections

Building stronger relationships between industry and occupational therapists has many advantages. The advantages for the employer include a reduction in injuries, which means a reduction of costs associated with lost productivity and a reduction in workers' compensation premiums through fewer claims. The advantage for on-site occupational therapists is that they gain a greater understanding of the job demands and the nature of the work so they can design better and more appropriate vocational training and return-to-work programs for their clients. The advantage for workers, of course, is a safer and healthier work environment.

While not every company will be rushing out to hire occupational therapists, there is a lot that companies and/or occupational health and safety managers can do to improve their own workplaces by using an "OT" approach. Problem areas often require a little effort to identify the source of the problem, and some creative brainstorming to find a solution. But not all solutions require major investments. Simple changes can often have a huge impact on the comfort and health of employees. For example, running out and purchasing all of the latest "ergonomically correct" tools and equipment will not fix the problem if the workstations are too low or too high. Adjusting the workstation height, having proper lighting or introducing job rotations are simple solutions that can have a significant impact on employees' health — at a very low cost.

I was impressed by the progressive, proactive approach to injury management being taken by the management of Sunterra Meats – Trochu. My work placement with them showed me that there is much value in having health professionals work directly with safety managers in private industry.

*Dana Robinson, B.Sc., is a fourth-year occupational therapy student at the University of Alberta.*

OCCUPATIONAL
# Health & Safety
MAGAZINE

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**Editor – *Anita Jenkins***

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**How to contact us**

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Pipefitters practice replacing the slings on the main block, in preparation for lifting a 15-ton vessel.
Image courtesy of Edmonton Pipe Trades Staff Photographer

## OFFICIAL OPENING OF

# Piperack for pipefitter training

The Edmonton Pipe Trades Training Centre's piperack/highline structure has been on the drawing boards for about five years. So its official opening on September 12, 2003, was a very special occasion. The hands-on training for journeyman pipefitters that the piperack makes possible will not only promote a higher quality of workmanship but also encourage safer work practices.

"Learning on the job worked fairly well in the past," says instructor Clark Cruickshank, "but it is less appropriate now. The work has become so much more time-pressured and complex. What used to take a year to 18 months now has to be done in six months, and the required skill levels are very high."

One of the guests at the opening was Ron Townsend, special representative for Canadian training, United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters. "To my knowledge," Townsend says, "no other local union in North America has this type of facility."

Cruickshank began offering two-week courses on the new piperack in mid-October, with a maximum of 12 students in each class. "We're trying to get our members educated and to lead the industry instead of playing catch-up," says Bob Thompson, assistant to the Centre's training coordinator.

---

AHBA President Jay Westman

## Home builders move to enhance safety

At their annual conference in Jasper, September 18-21, 2003, the Board of Directors of the Alberta Home Builders' Association passed two motions that commit their industry to taking a lead role in health and safety. The motions are:

1. to become a sponsoring partner for home builders in Alberta who wish to earn the Certificate of Recognition issued by the Alberta government's Workplace Health & Safety Partnerships program
2. to require employees of all subtrades used in the home building industry to complete the Construction Safety Training System program offered by the Alberta Construction Safety Association

The first motion is a major new development. Until very recently no residential construction company had earned a Certificate of Recognition. The implication of the second motion is that

thousands of employees who previously had no safety training will now hold a CSTS card issued by the ACSA.

"It's difficult to believe that this issue has progressed so much in the last year," says Jay Westman, president of the Alberta Home Builders' Association (and president of Jayman Master Builder). "Our industry has taken safety seriously, and we're starting to see some major results. It started with awareness, and now we are all gearing up to train the entire industry."

The home builders' focus on safety is the result of extensive teamwork over the past four years among representatives of the Alberta Home Builders' Association, the Alberta Partnerships in Health and Safety program and the Alberta Construction Safety Association.

## Workplace physical activity resource

Research findings suggest that both employees and employers stand to gain when companies and organizations encourage their workers to be physically active. The many positive results include reduced staff turnover and absenteeism, and a reduced incidence of injury.

The Alberta Centre for Active Living's Workplace Physical Activity Framework, which can be downloaded free at www.centre4activeliving.ca/research/resresources.html, provides guidance for people who wish to start and sustain a workplace physical activity program. A limited number of print copies are also available for $30 plus shipping and handling from Joanne Gesell, Education Coordinator, phone 780-415-8885, joanne.gesell@ualberta.ca.

WORK SAFE ALBERTA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

**Sharing to create safer workplaces**

Through the voluntary Work Safe Alberta Mentorship Program, an industry-led initiative supported by Alberta Human Resources and Employment, industry leaders and associations demonstrate best practices and act as peer guides to owners and senior managers who recognize the need to improve workplace health and safety standards.

*To obtain a copy of the Work Safe Alberta Mentorship brochure or learn more about the program call 1-866-415-8690 toll free or visit* **www.worksafely.org**.

WORK SAFE ALBERTA

CHOOSE SAFE NOT SORRY.

## NAOSH Week May 2-8, 2004

"Build a Safe Beginning" is the theme for this year's NAOSH (North American Occupational Safety and Health) Week, May 2-8. During this special week, safety-related activities will be held in many communities throughout North America. The purpose of this annual event is to focus the attention of employers, employees and the general public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace and encouraging new health and safety activities. *For more details, go to* **www.naosh.ca**.

### Contact your local NAOSH committee

Whether you are an employee or an employer, your local NAOSH committee would welcome your ideas and assistance. Here's a list of the people to call:

| | |
|---|---|
| **North of 60 (Yellowknife)** | Steve Petersen (867) 873-5192 |
| **North East (Bonnyville)** | John Page (780) 826-8912 |
| **Fort McMurray** | Andy Gauthier (780) 790-7509 |
| **Alberta Northwest (Grande Prairie)** | Mike Rappel (780) 518-1475 |
| **North Central Alberta (Whitecourt)** | Rick Radcliffe (780) 778-2293 |
| **Bi-Provincial (Lloydminster)** | Earl Alexander 1-866-875-7735 |
| **Edmonton** | Trevor Johnson (780) 910-4264 |
| **Alberta Central (Red Deer)** | Rodge Rodrique (403) 350-5771 |
| **Calgary** | Jordan Hubbs (403) 640-9268 |
| **Lethbridge** | Chris Nielsen (403) 328-4833 |
| **Medicine Hat** | Harry Newman (403) 528-3292 |
| **Brooks** | Roger Brown (403) 793-4430 |

ACPA Association of the Chemical Profession of Alberta

CHEMICAL HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM & WORKSHOP

**April 5 & 6, 2004**

Radisson Hotel & Conference Centre
Canmore, Alberta

*See the ACPA website for full details* **www.pchem.ca**

Alberta Human Resources and Employment | the people & workplace department | WORK SAFE ALBERTA

# Forum Promotes SAFE DRIVING at WORK

by Kerry Tremblay

Alberta's Chief Medical Examiner Graeme Dowling. Image courtesy of the Alberta Motor Association.

The Alberta Motor Association's second annual Mission Possible @ Work conference, held in Calgary on October 7, 2003, delivered an important message: "Traffic safety should be a major concern for every employer." According to the Alberta Motor Association, motor vehicle collisions are the number one cause of death in the workplace.

Several of the speakers put a human face on the terrible annual statistics on death and injury on Alberta roads – statistics such as one person being killed on Alberta roads every 22 hours and another injured every 25 minutes. And a crash every six minutes!

Speakers like Linda Rybak, the mother of a young worker who was killed, and Dr. Graeme Dowling, Alberta's Chief Medical Examiner, told stories of needless death from the victims' side.

**"According to the Alberta Motor Association, motor vehicle collisions are the number one cause of death in the workplace."**

Rybak talked about her 18-year old son's death in 1999. Craig Hlady was killed in a work-related motor vehicle rollover after the truck he was driving blew a tire on a gravel road. Craig had only a learner's permit and was not wearing a seatbelt. As Rybak spoke about her son's last day on life support and her reaction to it, Craig's picture smiled at the audience from the screen at the front of the room. Rybak wants employers to pay attention to training employees for the tasks they are given, to enforce seatbelt policies and to check vehicles regularly for maintenance items like tire wear. "Every employee who works for you," she said, "has a family who entrusts their family member to you."

Dr. Dowling told the more than 100 attendees at the day-long conference that he is "getting angry at seeing motor vehicle deaths. I shouldn't see motor vehicle deaths. None of this ever has to happen." He describes the majority of the 400-plus motor vehicle deaths on Alberta roads each year as "stupicides."

"These people didn't have to die," Dowling told the silent audience. "They could have gone home for supper."

THE NUMBERS FOR 2002

- Over 30 of the 101 work-related deaths in Alberta were due to traffic trauma.
- The Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta had $46 million in motor vehicle-related injury claims.
- Overall, there were more than 100,000 collisions, 26,000 injuries due to those collisions and 400 motor vehicle deaths in the province.

In Dowling's view, the ways to stop the carnage on Alberta roads are to wear seatbelts, stay sober, obey traffic signs, and pay attention to speed limits, red lights and stop signs.

As Dr. Dowling spoke, images of people who suffered motor vehicle deaths appeared on the screen at the front of the room – a hefty man with the imprint of a steering wheel clearly marked on his torso, a youth with the left side of his face taken off when the side window imploded, a person crushed beneath a car where he was thrown when the car rolled, and a heart ripped from its major artery when the victim was in a collision while not wearing a seatbelt.

The Northern regional manager for Workplace Health & Safety, Eric Reitsma, agrees with Dowling's assessment of how to stop the deaths and major incidents. Reitsma and his staff investigate major incidents in conjunction with police where there is a loss of life or major property on private roads such as logging and well service roads.

"We investigate about a dozen serious incidents a year," Reitsma states, "and four or five of those are fatalities." He says the key causes of the incidents he's reviewed are drivers who are in a hurry or are not paying attention to the road conditions. Others are tired. "If I could pass on a few tips," Reitsma says, "they would be to slow down, stop for rests and drive defensively."

Sandra Rourke, program coordinator for Mission Possible @ Work, confirms Dowling's and Reitsma's observations. She quotes Alberta Motor Association statistics that identify driver error as a contributing factor in 89 per cent of motor vehicle collisions.

Other speakers at the forum included experts on collision reconstruction and on fatigue and its role in the workplace. They described some of the major problems faced by workers who drive on the job. Another interesting presentation was a report on the driving habits and attitudes of rural Albertans.

Mission Possible @ Work, which was established four years ago, now has 120-plus corporations with more than 20,000 employees involved in their training program, which combines awareness, education and activities to combat unsafe driving habits. The word is spreading.

*For more information about Mission Possible @ Work, call (780) 430-5756 or send an e-mail to* **mpwork@ama.ab.ca**.

*Kerry Tremblay is a Calgary freelance writer specializing in safety and training.*

**WEB LINKS**

**www.officeofroadsafety.wa.gov.au/Facts/workplace/brochure/index.html**
Road Safety in the Workplace for Company Cars and Light Trucks

**www.rospa.org.uk/road/congress2000/proceedings/sochon.pdf**
Best Practice Workplace Driving Programs in New South Wales

**www.rta.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/saferworkdriving/**
Safer Work Driving

**www.rmis.rmfamily.com/frames/frmfleet.php**
Risk Management Internet Services – Fleet Library

**IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING**

*For contact information, see page 10.*

*Videos*

**Coaching the Maintenance Vehicle Operator** 30 min.
Defensive driving program specifically designed for the highway maintenance driver. (VC 0317)

**Coaching the Professional Truck Driver** 60 min.
Six segments aimed at the experienced truck driver stress driving techniques developed in cooperation with the trucking industry through the ATA Council of Safety Supervisors. (VC 0068)

**Oilfield Driver Training Program** 20 min.
Training related to moving equipment, winching, picker and crane operations, securing loads and rig moves. Directed at heavy haulers in the upstream petroleum service industry. (VC 0261)

# IMPROVING CONSTRUCTION SAFETY one good idea

by Allan Sheppard

What could be more logical than to base the design of your safety program on the best practices of employers doing the similar work in similar circumstances?

Logical, yes. Easy? Not necessarily. Worth the effort? Certainly, according to Tom Munro, district safety manager in the Edmonton headquarters of PCL Industrial Constructors. "You end up with the best efforts of a lot of people. You don't have to reinvent the wheel."

**"The key is, it's not my idea. It's not your idea. It's not XYZ's idea. It's the best idea."**
Tom Munro, PCL

Sharon Chadwick, best practices specialist, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, defines a best practice as one that:

- is based on current information
- has been put into practice, maintained and evaluated
- has been shown to be effective in preventing workplace illness or injury
- is of value to, or transferable to, other organizations

The final point, transferability, is the essence of best practices, says Munro. "You cannot choose a practice off the shelf or pick it off a Web site," he cautions. Employers thinking of adopting a best practice should ask some hard questions: "Does it make sense in our business? In our culture? In our business process?"

Munro's questions, along with Chadwick's definition, form the foundation of the process that the best practices committee of the Construction Owners Association of Alberta uses to identify best practices for its members (see sidebar). The chair of the Construction Owners Association's safety committee, Peter Dunfield, describes a six-step process:

1. Choose an issue or concern identified by members of the committee or the organization.
2. Set up a subcommittee with a good cross-section of industry stakeholders to search the literature and poll industry contacts.
3. Organize and analyse the information received.
4. Adapt or supplement research information in the light of the knowledge and experience of subcommittee and committee members.
5. Develop an action plan, including measurement criteria, for introducing an approved practice.
6. Field test and evaluate the process.

"Something magical happens when you put together a group of industry leaders who are all committed to making big improvements in safety," says Dunfield, who is senior loss management advisor at Syncrude Canada. "As they share and discuss their practices — what works and what could be improved — a synergy of thought and experience emerges. That typically leads to a best practice that is greater and more effective than the sum of its input. Leading members of the construction industry are working together to develop and implement practices and processes that will result in significant safety, quality and productivity improvements for everyone."

John Brogly, chair of the Construction Owners Association's best practices committee, cites two benefits of safety best practices, one for the employer, the other for the industry. Employers benefit from reduced incidents and injuries, which result in fewer losses and significant WCB premium savings.

# at a time

The benefit for the industry lies in a general elevation of the quality of work and workers in the province.

Brogly's comment about elevating the quality of work and workers: "You can't put a fence around your work site. No matter how good your own safety practices may be, they cannot be fully effective if you cannot find qualified staff because the industry standard is not up to your level, and if your subcontractors and labour providers do not meet your standards."

The biggest challenge for Brogly is getting contractor buy-in. Even when there is general agreement on the need and benefits, contractors may resist putting a practice into place. "We have had excellent compliance from association members," he says. "Our Web site lists nine practices that the best practices committee has reviewed and recommended. Members have accepted them and are applying them. We have another three practices under development. They will be received just as positively."

As Tom Munro sees it, best practices offer win-win solutions to common problems. "The key is, it's not my idea. It's not your idea. It's not XYZ's idea. It's the best idea."

*Allan Sheppard is a freelance writer and researcher who lives in Edmonton.*

**WEB LINKS**

**www.coaa.ab.ca/safety/safetyhome.htm**
Construction Owners Association of Alberta

**www.naosh.org/english/ab2.pdf**
Best Practices in Health and Safety

**www.benchmarkingreports.com/businessoperations/op79_health_safety.asp**
Health and Safety Management Best Practices

**www.ishn.com/CDA/ArticleInformation/features/BNP__Features__Item/0,2162,1087,00.html**
Finding Best Practices in Safety and Health

**www.nben.org/HTMLSrc/Forum/FBMP.html**
Forum for Best Management Practices

## Best practices examples

*According to Sharon Chadwick, best practices specialist, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, "There is no one set definition for best practices. Each organization defines best practices to meet its particular needs."*

**WCB-Alberta** lists some examples that fit its own definition in a 2002 citation of PCL's best practices:

- Ensure accurate and timely internal reporting procedures.
- Offer training to staff on WCB processes.
- Provide employees with modified work opportunities and workplace accommodation.
- Create an internal WCB administrator position.
- Ensure ongoing support and commitment from senior management.
- Establish internal safety campaigns to educate employees about workplace safety issues and potential safety hazards.

The **Construction Owners Association of Alberta** operates from a different set of needs reflecting the perspective of owners active in heavy construction. As of November 2003, the association had endorsed best practices in these areas:

- Behaviour-based safety programs that have been shown to increase awareness of safety expectations
- Owners' guide to contractor health and safety (effective management systems to minimize the potential for incidents to occur)
- Quality workforce — fitness for work: addresses "the physical demands of construction work and the physical capacities of the workers"
- Field-level risk assessment: sample tools and methods
- Alcohol and drug guidelines
- Generic aerial work platform training
- Cranes and hoisting
- Mentoring for workers at risk
- Construction Safety Training System (offered through a multimedia CD-ROM interactive video computer system)

## From the Courtroom

by David Myrol

*This is a new regular column on recent important developments in occupational health and safety law.*

On October 27, 2003, Parliament passed Bill C-45 (also known as the Westray bill) amending the Criminal Code. These amendments will significantly reform the law of corporate criminal liability in Canada and enhance the ability of prosecutors to hold corporate organizations and their officers more accountable for criminal acts. The amendments are therefore an important change to our criminal law – a change that is long overdue, and one that can be traced back to the injustice of the Westray Mine disaster.

Bill C-45 is about corporate criminal accountability. It is aimed at the small fraction of organizations and executives who cross into the area of criminal activity. The new amendments will have little impact on the vast majority of good corporate citizens. However, for those who do engage in criminal activity, the playing field has just dramatically changed.

In the Westray Mine disaster, 26 miners were killed when an explosion tore through a coal mine in Nova Scotia. Criminal charges were laid against the corporation and two of its officers, but those charges never made it to trial. The prosecution ended the case after one of their experts developed doubts about the actual cause of the explosion. This, combined with the existing corporate criminal law at the time, left the prosecutors with no option but to end the case before trial. Bill C-45 is an attempt to ensure that such an injustice does not occur again.

In the next issue I will itemize some of the specific changes of Bill C-45. To suggest topics for future columns, please contact me at dmyrol@shaw.ca.

*David Myrol is a Crown Prosecutor with Alberta Justice.*

**WEB LINKS**

www.gov.ns.ca/enla/pubs/westray/summary.htm
The Westray Story

http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/dept/pub/ccl_rpm/discussion/issues.html.
Government discussion paper on liability

## Workplace Health & Safety (WHS)

### Contact Workplace Health & Safety any time

For occupational health and safety information and assistance, or to order Workplace Health & Safety publications, phone the Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 or visit the Workplace Health & Safety Web site at www.whs.gov.ab.ca.

WORK SAFE ALBERTA

### Sign up for Workplace Health & Safety news

To receive monthly e-mail notices of all new Workplace Health & Safety Web site postings, sign up for a FREE subscription service through www.whs.gov.ab.ca.

### Alberta Government Library Labour Building Site

To review the large selection of occupational health and safety information materials available through the Alberta government, go to www.gov.ab.ca/hre/library.

To borrow materials, either contact your local library and make your requests through the inter-library loan system or visit the Alberta Government Library – Labour Building Site, at this address:
3rd floor, 10808 - 99 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5

**Library phone** (780) 427-8533
**Audio-Visual Services phone** (780) 427-4671

To reach either of the above numbers toll-free in Alberta, dial 310-0000 followed by the area code and phone number.

**Fax** (780) 422-0084

*Workplace Health & Safety is a division of Alberta Human Resources and Employment and falls under the jurisdiction of Minister Clint Dunford.*

# Improving Work Methods

## and WORKPLACE PRACTICES

by Ray Cislo

The human body adapts to the demands and stresses placed on it (in a process known as "work hardening"). However, without any noticeable change in the demands of the work, even "hardened" workers may develop injuries. The work methods and work demands may finally exceed the worker's capacity to perform them, or exceed the ability of the worker's tissues and joints to recover.

Work methods that do not reduce or eliminate awkward body positions, excessive force and repetitive motions may lead to injury. Work processes that include unnecessary steps or unnecessary materials handling may influence injury rates and productivity.

The nature of the work, how it is done and how workers are paid are additional factors. An incentive or piecework system usually encourages workers to work faster and longer, sometimes skipping rest breaks and shortening meal times. The increased pace places additional physical and mental stress on the worker, and both of these types of stress affect the worker's susceptibility to injury.

Machine pacing, in which a machine dictates the pace of work, can lead to similar problems. Research has shown that workers' lack of control over their work in such situations is also a source of stress that contributes to injuries.

Finally, inadequate or insufficient training can increase the risk of injury. Workers must understand:

- how to use their workstation (including how to adjust its equipment and furnishings)
- how to use or select tools appropriate to their work
- the safe work practices they must follow
- the signs and symptoms of – and methods of preventing – musculoskeletal injuries

Use these principles to redesign work methods and workplace practices:

1. Use jigs, vices and fixtures to hold workpieces. This avoids using the non-dominant hand as a vice and eliminates exposing it to excessive and repetitive forces.
2. Re-sequence jobs to reduce repetition and eliminate unnecessary process steps. Making this change may also improve productivity and reduce production costs.
3. Combine several properly selected jobs to provide diversity and reduce monotony and boredom. Jobs with greater diversity often provide workers with an increased sense of accomplishment.
4. Give workers responsibility for a wider range of duties that require a variety of skills and qualifications.
5. Automate highly repetitive operations. Machines do a better job of performing these tasks.
6. Allow self-pacing when possible. Workers may lose interest and motivation if the pace is too slow, and work that is paced too quickly may not provide enough recovery or rest time.
7. Have new workers and those returning to work start at a slower pace. Workers need to get accustomed and conditioned to their work before being expected to perform at peak levels.
8. Encourage frequent, short rest breaks, which allow workers to recover from their activities by stretching, changing body position or relaxing those hard-working muscles.
9. Ensure that workers are adequately trained. Workers need to know how to perform their work safely and comfortably.

*Ray Cislo, P.Eng., B.Sc.(H.K.) is a safety engineering specialist at Workplace Policy and Standards.*

# CATERING TO KITCHEN SAFETY

by Nordahl Flakstad

Behind the swinging doors of commercial and institutional kitchens, the pressure is on.

And the rush to satisfy clients and minimize the dangers of food contamination can sometimes push safety to a backburner.

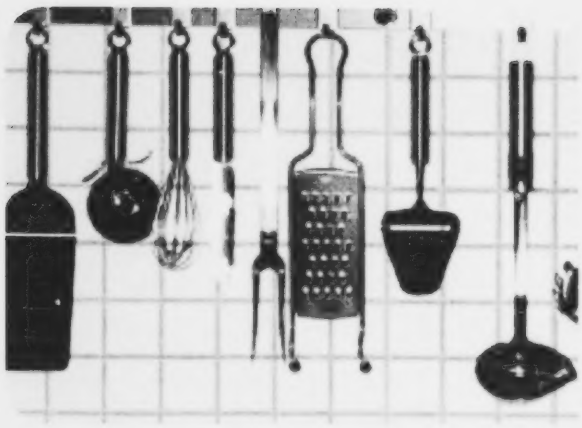
"We must convince employees and employers that if you slow down it's not going to make a difference to the customer," suggests Edmonton-based consultant Marlene Gibb, who teaches safety to hospitality workers. "It's not worth breaking an arm for the little time gained."

The head of Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's culinary arts program, Stanley W. Townsend, agrees. For him, it's straightforward: "If you're running a safe kitchen, you're running a productive kitchen."

## The statistics

Whether a kitchen is in a restaurant, hotel, nursing home, school, manufacturing plant or construction camp, the dangers are many and ever-present.

- Alberta Human Resources and Employment's Summary of Occupational Injuries and Diseases reports that in 2002 chefs and cooks had the third highest number of time-away-from-work injury claims (512). Only two other groups of workers had higher figures: truck drivers (1,254) and non-construction labourers (1,170).
- The numbers from the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta indicate that occupational injuries and diseases related to heating and cooking machinery and appliances totalled 93 in 2002. This number reflects a steady rise (from 70) since 1999.
- In 2002 sprains, strains and tears (28 per cent) were the most common injuries for chefs and cooks. Open wounds (cuts and lacerations) came a close second, at 24 per cent.



## The solutions

Keeping a kitchen safe requires employers and employees to constantly look for ways to eliminate hazards – ways to substitute (safer tasks and processes), separate (with screens and guards), re-engineer and introduce personal protective equipment.

The Alberta government's occupational health and safety officers look for safety systems and procedures, lockout/tagout during repair and maintenance, personal protective equipment, first-aid requirements and spill clean-up. They discuss non-compliance with employers and employees, and set a deadline for compliance as well as a deadline for developing a safety action plan.

Loredana Longo, a government occupational health and safety officer, says employers and employees commonly come up with their own solutions. She says that often a problem can be solved with a systemic change.

For example, it's hard to imagine a kitchen without knives, but systemic changes can reduce knife use. Another occupational health and safety officer, Robyn Vi'agenseil, recalls that after employees in one kitchen repeatedly cut themselves chopping lettuce, the employer switched to precut lettuce.

To reduce injuries on mechanical cutters, many employers have lockout policies during cleaning, and they ensure that sliders and guards are used while slicing. Also, recent models have interlocks so they only work when safety devices are in place. Mesh (Kevlar) gloves also help to reduce cuts.

The clothing worn by chefs and cooks promotes safety as well. Traditional white reflects heat, and snug, long sleeves shield arms against spills and splatters. The extra layer of material on the front of the double-breasted jacket adds protection. An ever-present cloth provides a means of grabbing hot handles. High hats let cooler heads prevail. Solid-top, slip-resistant footwear counters hot drips from stoves and spills on the floor.

**In 2002 chefs and cooks had the third highest number of time-away-from-work injury claims.**

Knife-handling – including proper storage and maintenance – is a key component of safety instruction for culinary arts and apprenticeship trainees at NAIT. "You have to enforce a few basic rules," says Townsend. "A sharp knife is a safer knife than a dull knife. It's a dull knife that you generally can't handle. It's a paradox."

NAIT students learn WHMIS procedures for handling potentially harmful products (detergents, de-calcifiers, caustic soaps, oven cleaners). They also learn about electrical hazards, fire safety, and lifting or dealing with hot and/or heavy items.

However, many kitchen workers don't receive the formal health and safety training that is provided at places like NAIT. These workers have to learn safe work practices on the job and then be sure to report any hazards they spot. (The new Occupational Health and Safety Regulation requires workers to report any unsafe equipment to their employers, who then must take appropriate action.)

Help is available from Alberta Human Resources and Employment, independent safety consultants and industry groups. For example, the Alberta Hotel Safety Association offers a two-day health and safety program-building course and a one-day "beyond the basics" course. Participants return to their workplaces alerted to hazards and prepared to train co-workers. Employers who belong to this association are certified under Alberta's Partnerships in Health and Safety Program. The certification is hotel-wide but kitchen safety is an important component. Under the Alberta Hotel Safety Association's peer audit program, hotel employees trained as auditors provide outside eyes to review other hotels' safety systems.

# Recipes FOR KITCHEN SAFETY

### Cuts
**Properly handle and store knives and equipment. Use cutting boards. Wash knives separately in clear water. Use equipment guards and sliders. Remove broken glass.**

### Trips, slips and falls
**Clean up spills and clutter. Use slip-resistant shoes and anti-slip mats.**

### Burns and scalds
**Use protective gloves/mitts (extending up arms), and long sleeves when working with deep fryers, grills, stoves, dishwashers, steamers, coffee urns and hot containers.**

### Chemical hazards
**Follow WHMIS and Material Safety Data Sheets. Use proper personal protective equipment. Install automatic dispensing systems.**

### Electrical hazards
**Replace damaged cords and plugs, and keep them away from water, oil, heat and non-insulated surfaces. Enforce lockout/tagout policies.**

### Strains, sprains and twists
**Store supplies at an appropriate height for lifting. Deliver ingredients in smaller containers to reduce lifting injuries. Share heavy lifting and the moving of heavy equipment and carts (lubricate wheels).**

### Fire
**Install automatic suppression system above grills and fryers. Remove residue from exhaust fans and hoods.**

### Dehydration
**Drink extra liquids when working in hot places.**

### Falling objects
**Store items at lower levels.**

### Noise
**Use earplugs or, if practical, install quieter equipment.**

## ADDITIONAL WAYS
*to maintain a safer kitchen*

- **Install systems to open and/or communicate from inside walk-in coolers and freezers.**
- **Train employees in the proper use of mixers, blenders and rollers.**
- **Keep an eye out for activities that may lead to repetitive strain injuries.**

Restaurants, which employ some 230,000 Albertans, don't have a comparable association-sponsored certification program. However, Chili's is one chain that has put in place a certified injury-reduction program by working through the AHSA. For Gerry Inglis, owner of six Alberta outlets, it's "part of our effort to become an employer of choice."

The Alberta Long Term Care Association, which represents 80 per cent of the beds and employees within that sector, runs a program similar to the one offered through the Alberta Hotel Safety Association and is intensifying safety awareness among kitchen and other staff. Long-term care staff are used to placing patients' well-being ahead of their own safety, says Kim Scott, occupational health and safety adviser for the Alberta Long Term Care Association. But, she says, "We stress that excellent resident care is dependent on having healthy, safe employees."

*Nordahl Flakstad is an Edmonton writer and communications consultant.*

**WEB LINKS**

**www.albertahotelsafety.com**
Alberta Hotel Safety Association

**www.ccohs.ca/youngworkers/cooks.html**
Occupational Hazards, Cooks (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety)

**www.osha.gov/SLTC/youth/restaurant/index.html**
Teen Worker Safety in Restaurants (U.S. Dept. of Labor)

**IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING**

*For contact information, see page 10.*

*Book*

**Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**
Food Services Workers Safety Guide (TX 943 C21 1996)

*Videos*

**Kitchen Safety** 15 min.
Common fire hazards in commercial kitchens (e.g., grease build-up in the duct system and the use of deep fat fryers) and safety measures (e.g., knowing what type of extinguisher to use and how to operate it). (FVC 092)

**Kitchen Safety** 13 min.
The safe use of kitchen equipment (e.g., knives, cooking utensils, slicers and cutters). (VC 0251)

**Kitchen and Canteen Safety** 15 min.
Appropriate handling of hygiene, personal protective equipment, knives, slips/trips/falls, kitchen fires and other kitchen risks or hazards. (VC 0190)

**Slips, Trips and Falls** 11 min.
An overview of common hazards such as cords on the floors, slippery surfaces, reaching too far and taking shortcuts, with an emphasis on good housekeeping practices. (VC 0187)

# Click onto WCB-Alberta's THREE NEW ONLINE SERVICES

E-Business support team at your service.

**by Wendy Theberge**

Dodie Lineham, occupational safety coordinator, David Thompson Health region, has been reporting staff injuries to the WCB over the Internet for nearly a year. With 8,000 employees across the region, filing reports using the traditional paper method can be a nightmare. "Going online lets all the key players, from payroll to management, fill in their part quickly, no matter how far apart everyone is," Dodie says. "Going through inter-office mail and faxes is time-consuming," she adds, "and things tend to get lost."

If you have a computer and access to the Internet, you can now visit the WCB-Alberta Web site, www.wcb.ab.ca, to tap into three convenient electronic services.

## Electronic reporting

Dodie Lineham is not the only one who is sold on filing reports over the Internet. E-reporting is expected to be the leading form of report submissions to the WCB in 2004 because it is timely, accurate, secure and convenient. It also dramatically improves turnaround times.

Through e-reporting, you can:

- keep all your WCB reports in one place for easy retrieval
- expect much faster responses from WCB staff
- meet your reporting deadlines easily through extended hours of availability with date-stamped submissions

The WCB's e-Business support team will set you up with an ID and password to get started.

## Online Direct Employer Clearance Certificates

You now have access to a hassle-free way to request and receive clearance certificates on your contractors and subcontractors.

- If you frequently hire subcontractors, become a "registered user."
- You don't need to formally register if you only occasionally hire subcontractors. Sign on as an "unregistered principal" to obtain a fast and easy clearance.
- Subcontractors can also easily request clearances on themselves for their principals.

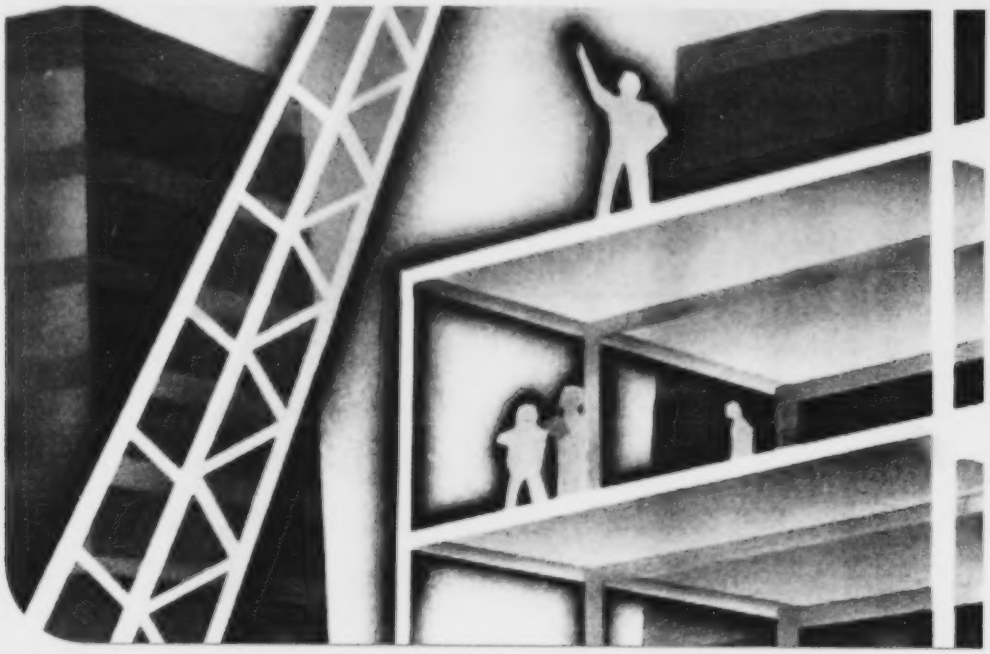
## Loss Control Reporting

Employers with a WCB account can tap into an online service that provides a snapshot of what your premium rates are and why. At a glance, you can track:

- the amount the WCB has paid to date for a specific claim
- the monthly total for all claims
- the total claims picture for your industry

*For more information, call the e-Business support team at 780-498-7688 (in Edmonton) or 1-866-922-9221 (in Alberta).*

*Wendy Theberge is a communications advisor at WCB-Alberta.*



by Rachel Storr

More than 100 Albertans are killed on the job each year, and someone is injured at work every 3.5 minutes in Alberta. The provincial government's many initiatives in response to these significant challenges include the adoption of a new Occupational Health and Safety Code in November 2003.

Employers have until April 30, 2004, to comply with the code, which consolidates the technical safety requirements of the eleven old OHS regulations into one easier-to-use document. (Employers must still follow the eleven old regulations until they are repealed at the end of April.)

"The new OHS Code is part of the overall Work Safe Alberta initiative to reduce Alberta workplace incidents by 40 per cent," says Human Resources and Employment Minister Clint Dunford. "All employers will be responsible for knowing the requirements."

The code has the same enforceability and legal status as a regulation, says Yan Lau, acting manager, Legislation, Policy and Technical Services, Alberta Human Resources and Employment. "A person who contravenes the code is guilty of an offence and liable to a maximum penalty of $500,000 and six months' imprisonment."

OTHER MAJOR CHANGES under the December 2002 amendment to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*:

- Maximum fines for a first offence have been increased from $150,000 to $500,000.
- The court can now impose alternate penalties for offences, such as ordering employers to provide safety programs or education programs.
- The length of time available to prosecutors to begin a prosecution has been increased from one year to two.
- Government now has the authority to set up an on-the-spot specified fines system, similar to that used for traffic violations.
- The names of employers with the best and worst safety performance records can now be made public.

The new OHS Code puts a major focus on planning and on assessment of hazards. "An employer is required to conduct a written hazard assessment of the work site and to implement appropriate control measures for all hazards identified," Lau says.

## A three-step process

The OHS Code is the third step of a three-step process for updating Alberta's occupational health and safety legislation.

1. The Occupational Health and Safety Act was amended in December 2002 (see sidebar). One of the amendments permits the use of an OHS Code for detailed technical requirements and ensures the enforceability of the code.
2. A new Occupational Health and Safety Regulation took effect on March 31, 2003. The regulation deals primarily with administrative and policy issues such as applying for permits and certificates, posting orders and notices, and the availability of documents. These requirements are best left in the form of a regulation, as they do not need frequent updating.
3. The OHS Code contains detailed technical safety requirements in

# KNOW the CODE

## IT COULD SAVE LIVES AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE

support of the act and regulation. The code format, which the government can update more quickly than a regulation, will help to keep Alberta's occupational health and safety standards current.

Since Alberta's occupational health and safety legislation was last completely overhauled some time ago, the new code incorporates a number of updates, including these new standards:

- specific protective measures for workers who act as "first-responders" to a work site emergency
- requirements on blood-borne pathogens like human immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS) and hepatitis
- requirements for work sites where lead exposure may adversely affect workers
- measures for ergonomic protection of workers who handle materials manually

### Businesses are preparing

The Canadian Petroleum Safety Council has distributed a "gap analysis" CD to help petroleum producers, contractors and other stakeholders get up to code before the end of April 2004. The CD was first spearheaded by Shell Canada through the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, who then turned over distribution to the safety council.

"We're going through and analyzing gaps using this CD," says Rory Ryder, superintendent, Health Safety and Environment for ATCO Electric Operations.

One of the biggest challenges at ATCO, says Ryder, is the number of new standards written into the Occupational Health and Safety Code. He thinks smaller contractors will have a hard time determining whether they are meeting these requirements.

"The hazard assessments we conduct will need to be heavily weighted on site-specific conditions," says Ryder. "Our power-line construction crews, for example, may be in a site with road traffic one day and in a rough terrain area the next. We need to recognize the hazards and how to manage them in each instance."

The code's length might also be a concern – at last count almost 500 pages. "It's important to remember that it's a consolidation," points out Ryder. "Everything is now all in one document. With the different regulations it's probably close to the same number of pages as the safety regulations and other materials would have been before."

ATCO is using the six-month grace period (November through April) to get up to speed and help bring all their routinely used contractors on line.

### Role of the Occupational Health and Safety Council

"This is a huge step forward," comments Patty Whiting, chair of the Occupational Health and Safety Council. "The changes in the OHS Code move occupational health and safety in this province into the 21st century."

In future, the OHS Council will review the changes to the code that Alberta Human Resources and Employment recommends after its public consultations and then make its own recommendations. Because of its enhanced voice in the process of code updates, the OHS Council's membership has increased from six to nine in order to include more subject-area expertise.

"The OHS Council is going to ensure that workplace safety standards are current and effective in this province," says Minister Dunford.

Whiting says the code will be "more responsive to real-world

changes. After all, a lot has changed in industry even in the last five to ten years, especially in technology. We'll be able to change the code as new developments come out."

"To be effective, safety regulations must be current and relevant," says Minister Dunford. "This new code will make safety requirements simpler to understand."

"We are asking our partners to work with us to raise awareness and educate employers and workers about best practices," adds Dunford. "Together we will make safety our new bottom line."

*Rachel Storr is a writer at Alberta Human Resources and Employment Communications.*

## THE OHS CODE

### REPLACES THESE REGULATIONS:

- NOISE
- CHEMICAL
- MINES SAFETY
- VENTILATION
- EXPLOSIVES SAFETY
- JOINT WORK SITE
- FIRST AID
- GENERAL SAFETY
- HEALTH + SAFETY COMMITTEES (4 REGULATIONS)

Copies of the OHS Code are available from the Queen's Printer by calling toll free 310-0000 and entering (780) 427-4952.

**WEB LINKS**

**www.whs.gov.ab.ca**
Information about the new Code, including highlights, summaries and explanation guides

**www.gowlings.com/resources/PublicationPDFs/worksitenewsmay2003.pdf**
Article in *Worksite News*

**www.mhsa.ab.ca/speech2002.html**
Minister's Speech

## A new home for the Partnerships newsletter

**The Partnerships information bulletin, which until the spring of 2003 was mailed to COR holders three times yearly, is now being published on this page.**

### New Partner

Goodyear Canada Inc. of Medicine Hat has become the 59th Partner in Health and Safety.

### New Sponsoring Partner

Welcome to the Alberta Home Builders' Association, which has recently become the ninth Sponsoring Partner in Health and Safety. (See story in "News & Notes," page 4.)

The Alberta Home Builders' Association will co-sign Certificates of Recognition in the residential construction sector. The first three Certificates of Recognition ever issued to home builders in Alberta were presented at the Association's annual conference in September 2003 – to Homes by Avi, Sterling Homes of Edmonton and Pacesetter Homes. It is anticipated that as many as 40 home builders will participate in the Partnerships program over the next year.

### Partnerships Gains National and International Attention

Interest in our rapidly growing program has been spreading to other provinces of Canada and even to other countries. Here is a summary of some recent activities outside Alberta.

**British Columbia**
The Partnerships team made a presentation to B.C.'s WCB in 2000, and the province has since introduced a version of Partnerships as a pilot within the road building industry.

**Western Provinces**
At an October 2003 conference involving all western construction associations held in Kelowna, B.C. Partnerships provided input into a new initiative that could ultimately create a Certificate of Recognition for all western provinces.

# NEWS

**Nova Scotia**
The construction industry in Nova Scotia has been using an adapted version of Partnerships for several years. In September 2003 the Nova Scotia WCB reported that plans are underway for the provincial government to take a leadership role, much like what Alberta Human Resources and Employment does here, with a view to expanding the program into all industries. The Partnerships team is sharing information and will remain in contact with Nova Scotia officials as their program develops.

**Ontario**
For several years Ontario has had a limited incentive program based on Partnerships, and in September 2003 the Ontario WCB announced that the province has decided to adopt the complete Partnerships program.

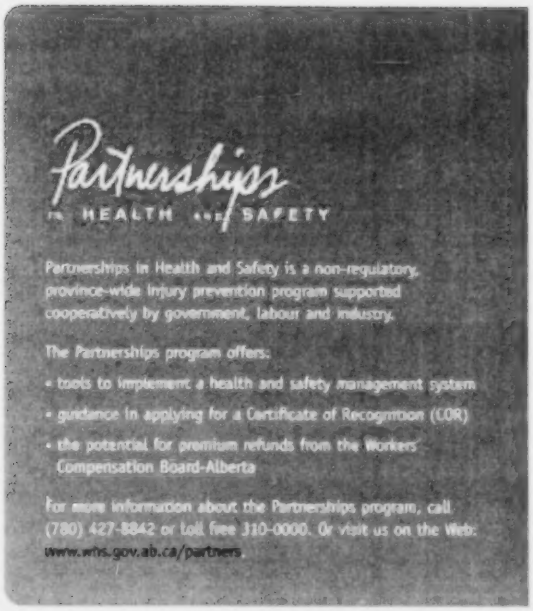
**United States**
In August 2003 the U.S. Federal Mines Department contacted Partnerships after seeing a version of the Partnerships audit document. The staff, who have adapted the Partnerships Audit to meet their specific industry needs, said they were impressed with the document's practicality and thoroughness. They found it more user friendly than other similar instruments being used in North America, and just as applicable.

**Other countries**
Australia has had a modified Partnerships program for some time, and China piloted its first version of the program in 2002.

## Targeted Employer Program

Approximately 700 employers account for 32 per cent of all lost-time claims in Alberta. If you are in this group, you can expect a visit from a Workplace Health & Safety compliance officer. As well, the Partnerships team has made a commitment to have its consultants visit 300 of the 700 targeted sites.

The compliance officer will make the initial site visit to review your company's injury history, and possibly request copies of documentation such as incident investigation reports. Then the officer will inspect the worksite to identify any variances from the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations. Depending on the severity of the situation, orders may be issued and dates assigned for having variances corrected.


Partnerships
in HEALTH and SAFETY
Partnerships in Health and Safety is a non-regulatory, province-wide injury prevention program supported cooperatively by government, labour and industry.
The Partnerships program offers:
• tools to implement a health and safety management system
• guidance in applying for a Certificate of Recognition (COR)
• the potential for premium refunds from the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta
For more information about the Partnerships program, call (780) 427-8842 or toll free 310-0000. Or visit us on the Web: www.whs.gov.ab.ca/partners

If a Partnerships consultant is involved, he or she will discuss with you the benefits of developing and implementing or improving a formal health and safety management system. The purpose of this activity is to provide specific information that will help you improve your company's health and safety performance.

## THE NINE SPONSORING PARTNERS:

- **Alberta Home Builders' Association**
- **Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors**
- **Canadian Energy Pipeline Association**
- **Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers**
- **Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors**
- **Canadian Plastics Industry Association West**
- **High River and District Occupational Health and Safety Management Program**
- **Petroleum Services Association of Canada**
- **Printing and Graphics Industries Association**

# YOUTH WELL SERVED AT London

**by Bill Corbett**

If you were a 16-year-old with your first part-time retail job, you might think that nothing all that bad could happen from a health and safety perspective. Getting run over by a zealous customer with a shopping cart, maybe. Or getting ribbed by your buddies over the store uniform. But nothing as risky as riding a skateboard, right?

Wrong. A loaded palette could topple on you, a drug needle left on the bathroom floor could prick you, a spill on Aisle 3 could send you for a tumble or a car could hit you while you're hauling that wide-screen TV across a busy parking lot. Not to overemphasize the risk, but a lot of things can go wrong in a retail environment for an unaware or overly enthusiastic student employee.

That's why London Drugs has taken a leadership role in recognizing that young employees, in particular, need to be aware of health and safety risks and precautions. Last spring the store launched a Canada-wide program for new employees under 18, a group that typically makes up more than 10 per cent of the company's workforce.

The London Drugs program for youth is part of the health and safety introduction that all new employees go through, which includes working with a safety mentor, or buddy, and filling out a safety orientation checklist. The youth program has an added component, though. Parents or guardians of all new employees under 18 receive a letter that:

- provides information about the potential risks of injury on the job
- explains London Drugs' safety program

***Dear Parent/Guardian of _____***

*Congratulations! Your son/daughter is now a member of the London Drugs team. At London Drugs, safety comes first. We are proud of our good safety record and our ability to provide a safe work environment to all our workers. We also recognize that young and new workers are statistically at a higher risk of sustaining a work-related injury than more experienced workers.*

*Many injuries occur as a result of poor communication; either the young or new worker does not ask questions or the employer does not provide clear instructions. As a parent, you play an important role in ensuring your son or daughter understands the instructions given so they can fulfill their new responsibilities in the safest way possible.*

*...It is easy to think that any retail job is automatically safe but keep in mind there are risks inherent to working in a retail environment.*

[Excerpt from letter to parents of young employees]

At the Kelowna store where the London Drugs youth safety program was started in 2001, Melinda Lowenberg helps John McCormack to get a safe start on the job.
Photo by Wayne E. Duchart of Photography West. Thanks also to WCB-BC, which first published this image in the February 2003 issue of their *WorkSafe Magazine*.

# Drugs

- encourages parents to discuss with their son or daughter the need for understanding and vigilance

"The fact that young people are eager to do a job makes them attractive as employees," says Laurie Lowes, manager of health and safety for London Drugs. "But that can also be to their detriment, especially if they hurry through things and don't follow safety procedures. Statistically, new and young employees are more likely to be injured on the job."

"As one parent said to me," Lowes continues, "We tell our kids to look both ways before crossing the street and not talk to strangers. But when we send them off to work for the first time, we just say: 'Have a good day.'"

A lot of things can go wrong in a retail environment for an unaware or overly enthusiastic student employee.

Dan Do, a 16-year-old, part-time employee at a new London Drugs store in south Calgary, says that he and his parents were surprised and impressed with how serious his new employer is about safety. "Friends who work at other places say they get maybe a one-day safety orientation, but it's nothing as involved as this," he says. "It takes a while to take everything in. But it's spread over a few weeks, and you've got someone there (a mentor) who can answer questions."

While a retail environment may not pose the same potential for injury as, say, a factory or plant, the risks are more widespread. London Drugs has a good health and safety record but is acutely aware of the list of pitfalls. They include high shelves, ladders, heavy boxes, garbage compactors, hazardous chemicals and drugs, and robberies or other threats of violence.

"If someone leaves a drug syringe on the bathroom floor, a 16-year-old might instinctively think they should pick it up before some little kid does," says Neil Lauer, manager of Do's Calgary store. "There's a whole program of what to do in that situation. We want to make sure that every young employee, and indeed every new employee, has taken every step they should to work in a safe environment and knows what to do and where to go if something goes wrong."

Besides spending a couple of weeks under the wing of a safety buddy, new store employees must complete a 35-question health and safety checklist. "We give them the list the first day on the job and they go through it and complete it, and the safety buddy reviews it with them," says Lowes. "The questions cover simple but crucial information like safety exit locations, locations of safety vests, material safety data checklists, holdup buttons and where to go during an emergency evacuation. They have to research and answer the questions themselves. It assures us that new employees know a lot of the safety details."

"Knowledge is power when it comes to health and safety," says Michelle Brazil, manager of a London Drugs store in Edmonton. "In the long-term, I think this checklist is going to help us big time in reducing injuries – and not

just for new, young employees. I've already had 25 to 30 of our regular staff go through the checklist. It's a good refresher for them."

All this might seem a bit overwhelming to a high school student looking to pick up some extra spending money working the odd afternoon, evening or weekend shift. But the health and safety information is doled out in bite-sized chunks and, most importantly, it helps to keep these young employees safe. "It's worth taking a bit of extra time to make sure these kids know what to do and what to expect," says Lauer. "I think it's also important to keep the parents informed, so that everyone stays in the loop."

*Bill Corbett is a Calgary writer.*

**WEB LINKS**

**www.oznet.ksu.edu/entomology/lab_safety/safety_orientation.pdf**
**www.fin.ucar.edu/sass/safety/ucar_sass/articles/NESO.doc**
**www.labsafety.org/files/ppt1/1.ppt**
**http://newsletter.envirowin.com/e_article000050256.cfm**
New Employee Safety Orientation

**www.ehs.berkeley.edu/whatwedo/healthsafety/iipp/iippform7.pdf**
New Employee Safety Training Record

**www.ccohs.ca/youngworkers/overview.pdf**
Young Workers Overview

**IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING**

*For contact information, see page 10.*

Video
**Lost Youth: Four Stories of Injured Young Workers** 17 min.
Four stories of young lives forever changed after serious workplace incidents. (VC 0365)

## ANNUAL AWARDS FOR INNOVATION IN WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

This new awards program, initiated in 2003 and administered by the Occupational Health and Safety Council, will recognize the most innovative health and safety initiatives in Alberta workplaces over the previous year. All types of innovations relating to occupational health and safety will be considered — examples include management of workplace impairment issues, planning for safety at the design stage of projects and the use of engineering controls to replace the necessity for personal protective equipment.

Deadline for applications: February 15, 2004.
For complete details, visit **www.worksafely.org**

**Web Watcher**

by Bob Christie

# It's time for a change

When we started doing Web Watcher, we felt it was important to describe this new resource and provide some pointers to help you build a library of Web site favourites. By now, however, you will have learned a great deal about and from the huge resource we call the Internet.

You communicate with your colleagues via e-mail, you search for information and resources, and increasingly you order supplies... all on the Internet. You have probably found a search engine you like and are learning how to make it serve you as you build and maintain your own favourites list. Each of you will have a list that is unique to your industry, your interests and, most importantly, your style.

Since our continuing to highlight safety-related sites is really a losing proposition, we will wrap up our lists of favourites in the next two issues. After that, Web Watcher will turn its focus to reporting on new innovations on the Internet.

### Additional Canadian sites from the "for profit" sector
(continued from the September 2003 column)

Canadian Occupational Safety Magazine, a CLB Media publication, provides an exhaustive listing of related Canadian Web sites and many useful articles. **www.cos-mag.com/links.htm**

Ipsos-Reid opinion poll results from a survey on workplace health and safety practices. **www.ipsos-reid.com/media/dsp_displaypr_cdn.cfm?id_to_view=1882**

Dow Canada - Environmental Health and Safety.
**www.dow.com/environment/ehs.html**

Workplace Safety and the Criminal Code from the Canada Safety Council. Not really a for profit site, but something that any responsible safety person needs to read (and quite possibly make a copy to leave on the CEO's desk).
**www.safety-council.org/news/sc/2003/ohs.html**

2004 IAPA Health and Safety Trade Show, Toronto, April 26-30 (includes a page of booked exhibitors).
**www.iapa.ca/conference/index.html**

Remember, there are no altruistic Web sites. Everybody has a built-in bias. Watch for it – or you may be led down a garden path.

*Bob Christie is a partner at Christie Communications Ltd., a multimedia development company in Edmonton. Bob supplies most of the Web link resources for the articles in this magazine.*

## Real World Solutions

This regular column suggests simple, inexpensive ways to improve employee safety and health through adjustments to the workplace.

What improvements have you made at your workplace? If you've found a solution worth sharing, please send it to **ray.cislo@gov.ab.ca**.

### Sit-Stand Stool

**The Problem**
Some workers become very tired from always having to stand at a workstation or counter.

**The Solution**
A sit-stand stool, which allows the worker to alternate between sitting and standing, can be helpful if the worker doesn't need to move too much, doesn't have too far to reach and isn't handling heavy objects.

**Benefits**
Being able to easily move between sitting and standing reduces stress on the lower back and legs.

### Drum Handler or Truck

**The Problem**
Drums are often heavy and difficult to move.

**The Solution**
A drum handler or truck allows workers to easily lift and tilt a drum. Drum trucks are available in many sizes to suit the drum being moved.

**Benefits**
Because drums don't need to be balanced on an edge and rolled:

- Workers suffer fewer lifting injuries.
- Pouring the contents no longer involves a danger of tipping the drum.



*Occupational Health & Safety Magazine* publishes workplace fatalities to remind readers of the importance of workplace health and safety.

The information is not a final investigation report. In many cases investigations are continuing. Final investigation reports are filed at the Alberta Government Library - Labour Building Site and can be reviewed there or on the Workplace Health & Safety Web site at **www.whs.gov.ab.ca** under Fatalities.

An occupational fatality refers to the death of a worker caused by a work-related incident or exposure.

To protect personal privacy, the fatality descriptions do not include the names of the deceased.

## Work-related incident fatalities June 2003 - September 2003

Most work-related incident fatalities that fall under provincial jurisdiction are investigated by Workplace Health & Safety. In general, highway traffic, farm, disease or heart attack fatalities are not investigated.

**The following fatalities have been or are being investigated.**

**A 22-year-old floorhand** working on a drilling rig crew was driving on a lease road. The worker's vehicle collided with a vehicle traveling in the opposite direction.

**A 26-year-old truck driver** with about three years of experience operating heavy equipment was driving a 30-ton rock truck down a hill at a new home construction site. The truck rolled over after going out of control. The driver was ejected from the cab and crushed by the truck.

**A 60-year-old heavy equipment operator** with 30 years of experience struck a gas line and died from burn injuries received when escaping gas ignited.

**A 71-year-old painter** was stapling polyethylene onto a wall while standing on a rolling scaffold. The scaffold rolled, causing the worker to fall 4.6 m onto a concrete floor. The worker had more than 50 years of experience.

**A 26-year-old lead hand/boom operator** with about one year of experience in the job was loading an all-terrain vehicle onto a steel flat deck of a truck. The loading ramp collapsed, causing the ATV to flip over and land on the worker's chest.

**A 64-year-old house mover** was transporting a sectional building on a trailer. The building broke in half, and one half of the building fell from the trailer, crushing the worker. The worker had over 30 years of experience.

**A 34-year-old apprentice welder** with 18 months' experience was welding in a tank. A methane explosion occurred, throwing the welder against the wall of the tank.

**A 57-year-old worker** who had owned and operated a mobile crushing unit for six months was crushed in the machine's rotating mechanism while performing maintenance tasks.

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